

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAK #0984 1441216
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 231216Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6382
INFO RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4256
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0003

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000984

SIPDIS

WHA/CCA FOR DAVID MCFARLAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/23/2018
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [EINT](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: CUBA: REVIEW OF TURKEY FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE III
OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 52541

Classified By: Economic Counselor Dale B. Eppler for reasons 1.4 (B) &
(D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkey's relations with Cuba are limited, and its investment on the island is nonexistent. The two countries conduct a yearly Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting, chaired in March in Ankara by Cuba's Minister for Foreign Economic Relations and Foreign Investment and Turkey's State Minister for Foreign Trade. There is no bilateral trade agreement between the two countries, and Turkey does not sponsor any exchange programs or sponsor Cuban doctors or medical treatment. End summary.

¶2. (C) MFA Cuba Desk Officer Ece Ozturk Cil told us the Turkish government has not taken any specific action to condemn human rights abuses in Cuba, though the GOT participates in European Union efforts to draw attention to human rights abuses. Turkey participates in a yearly bilateral Joint Economic Commission (JEC) with the Government of Cuba, Cil explained. In March, Cuban Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Foreign Investment, Marta Lomas Morales, chaired the JEC with Turkish Foreign Trade Minister, Kursad Tuzmen, and met with Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek in Ankara. Cil confirmed Cuba has no exchange programs with Turkey, does not sponsor Cuban doctors working in Turkey, and does not pay for medical travel for Turkish citizens.

¶3. (C) Turkish Foreign Trade Undersecretariat (FTU) Americas Department Head for Bilateral Agreements, Atilla Bastirmaci, told us that Turkey and Cuba's total bilateral trade volume in 2007 was around \$33 million, \$30 million of which was Turkish consumer goods exported to Cuba. Turkey imports a small amount of Cuban rum, cigars and sugar and, in 2005, imported \$2.5 million worth of Hepatitis B vaccines. There is no preferential trade agreement between the two countries, although Cuba is the only Caribbean country with which FTU officials maintain a regular trade-related dialogue. Bastirmaci told us that there is no Turkish investment in Cuba, but FTU officials hope to increase Turkish exports to the island, and Turkish contractors are interested in entering the housing and renovation market if and when the opportunity arises. A Turkish company is currently building a sulfuric acid factory in Cuba, but it will be owned and operated by a Canadian company. Bastirmaci was also aware of two Cuban exchange students currently studying Turkish in Turkey, and he told us that some Turkish students were interested in studying Spanish in Cuba but had not yet made arrangements for such a program.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
[http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turk ey](http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turk%20ey)

WILSON